

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 06280 031521Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 06280

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FOR STATE AND NSC ONLY

EUR FOR LOWENSTEIN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR FR
SUBJECT: LONDON SUMMIT PREPARATORY MEETING

REF: DOBBINS-GAMMON TELECON, MARCH 1

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT GISCARD HAS DECIDED THAT BERNARD
CLAPPIER WILL BE FRANCE'S SOLE RPT SOLE REPRESENTATIVE
AT THE MARCH 12-13 PREPARATORY MEETING. END SUMMARY.

1. DCM HAD MEETING WITH DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS,
FRANCOIS DE LABOULAYE, FOLLOWING LATTER'S RETURN FROM
ONE DAY TRIP TO LONDON. LABOULAYE, THOUGH WITH PLENTI-
FUL WARNINGS THAT POLITICAL TOPICS SHOULD NOT BE
DISCUSSED AMONG THE SEVEN COORDINATORS AT THE
MARCH 12-13 PREPARATORY MEETING BUT ONLY AMONG THE
FOUR, INDICATED THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY WISHED TO SEND
ITS DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, HENRI FROMENT-
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MEURICE, WITH CLAPPIER TO THE PREPARATORY MEETING IN
WASHINGTON. FROMENT-MEURICE THOUGH AN ECONOMIC EXPERT
ALSO HAS STRONG POLITICAL CONE QUALIFICATIONS.

2. HOWEVER, SOME TWO HOURS LATER LABOULAYE TELEPHONED
TO REVERSE HIS FIELD. A PRESIDENT GISCARD MESSAGE TO
PRESIDENT CARTER IS BEING DESPATCHED MOMENTARILY,

WHICH WILL STATE THAT CLAPPIER IS THE SOLE FRENCH COORDINATOR AND WILL ATTEND THE MARCH 12-13 PREPARATORY MEETING ALONE. THIS IS TO UNDERLINE FRENCH INSISTENCE THAT ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MATTERS ARE CENTRAL TO THE LONDON SUMMIT. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT GISCARD REMAINS WILLING TO DISCUSS WHATEVER POLITICAL QUESTIONS US PRESIDENT WILL RAISE, HE IS INSISTENT THAT THESE SHOULD BE PREPARED ONLY AMONG THE FOUR AND CONSIDERS THE PROPOSED MARCH 21 POLITICAL DIRECTORS MEETING IN LONDON TO BE THE PROPER VENUE.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS BEEN TOLD BY PRIME MINISTERIAL STAFFERS THAT PRIME MINISTER BARRE WISHES TO KEEP CONTROL OF SUMMIT PREPARATION FOR ECONOMIC-FINANCIAL MATTERS IN HIS HANDS THROUGH HIS CLOSE FRIEND AND ASSOCIATE BERNARD CLAPPIER. ALTHOUGH QUAI D'ORSAY OBVIOUSLY HOPED TO GET THEIR MAN INTO THE ACTION (AND WAS EVEN WILLING TO USE POLITICAL SUBJECTS HANDLE IN ORDER TO DO SO) PRIME MINISTER HAS OBVIOUSLY PREVAILED AT ELYSEE LEVEL. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT FRENCH WILL BE RELATIVELY FLEXIBLE REGARDING POLITICAL AGENDA IN THE UPCOMING POLITICAL DIRECTORS MEETING, BUT THEY WILL INSIST THAT THESE SUBJECTS NOT RPT NOT PART OF THE RAISON D'ETRE FOR THE LONDON SUMMIT.
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